DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 052 445 AC 010 484

AUTHOR	Connor, Thomas R.
TITLE	Prince Edward Island Newstarts' Comprehensive Manpower Development System.
INSTITUTION	Prince Edward Island NewStart, Inc., Montauge.
PUB DATE	Feb 71
NOTE	7p.; reprint
JOURNAL CIT	C.V.A. Journal; p2-7 Feb 1971
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29
DESCRIPTORS	*Disadvantaged Groups, *Employment Opportunities, *Manpower Development, *Recruitment, *Vocational Education

ABSTRACT

An approach to new methods of helping disadvantaged people gain employment taken by Prince Edward Island Newstart is outlined. This approach is a Comprehensive Manpower Development System. The major components of the system consist of: (1) variants of some standard manpower training programs, (2) innovative recruitment and assignment techniques, and (3) various placement methods. The adult basic education component is designed to allow any recruit to enter at any level from illiteracy and proceed in the program at his own pace to whatever level he may achieve up to grade 10. The initial skills training subsystem includes training in small engine and auto mechanics, welding, business and commercial skills, entry-level health occupations, and child care and homemaker assistants. Recruitment is an active outreach measure. Mass media advertising, personal contact, contact with interested groups and other parties for referrals are used. The Industrial Relations officer in the program is responsible for persuading employers to take trainees in an area with a very high rate of labor redundancy. (CK)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

ED052445

PRINCE EDWARD IS[illegible]D NEWSTARTS' COM[illegible]NSIVE [illegible]NPOWER DE[illegible]PMENT [illegible]TEM

D[illegible]h[illegible]as E. C[illegible]

An Article in the May, 1970 issue of the C.V.A. Journal by D. S. Conger described the Saskatchewan NewStart approach to new methods of helping disadvantaged people gain employment. Mr. Conger showed that a Life Skills training program was a major feature of the Saskatchewan approach. In the following article Dr. Connor outlines a somewhat different approach to the same problem taken by Prince Edward Island NewStart. This approach is a Comprehensive Manpower Development System.

Dr. Connor is Director, Research, Prince Edward Island NewStart Incorporated.

Prince Edward Island NewStart was established in Montague, Prince Edward Island, in late 1967. Organization and planning went forward and by summer of 1969 a human resources survey was conducted, and a hastily assembled but well-qualified staff had conducted several types of investigation of local systems of welfare, education and training and employment. At the same time they had planned several innovative programs of training for unemployed and underemployed people of the area.

These projects were all based on similar findings and hypotheses but were conducted independently of each other. Each included a rigidly defined target group and naturally a more restricted sample. Each attempted to present a program tailored to the needs of the participants and to the socio-economic conditions prevailing in the area. However, the only link between the projects was at corporate headquarters, where all projects were monitored by the research staff.

It very soon became clear to researchers and shortly thereafter to operating staff that these disconnected projects were not achieving the quite modest objectives that had been set for them. This in itself was not serious, since they were exploratory programs and the evidence that was

2

produced was quite valuable in replanning and improving future projects. Specifically, the following problems began to come to light:

1. *Selection and matching of people and training programs had not been perfect. Consequently, there were several "misfits" in each program who had no suitable alternative to continuing in a program they did not like, than to drop out and lose all chance of training and their winter income.*
2. *Each project, though attempts had been made to make them complete packages, suffered a lack of some needed component(s). These deficiencies caused some very hasty revisions and additions, or alternatively, a truncated program.*
3. *As the projects neared their individual completion dates one fact became abundantly clear to all concerned; there was no realistic outlet for graduates. Participants had been more or less prepared for new forms of employment, and aspirations had been aroused, but neither the environment nor the training agency had made provision for application of new skills or fulfillment of new hopes.*

Consequently, the Prince Edward Island NewStart operating program for 1970-1971, and presumably beyond this date to its termination, reflected attempts to correct for these internal and environmental factors. By early 1970, the Corporation had developed in its thinking and in its expertise to the point where all elements could be brought together in a Comprehensive Manpower Development System. This system was designed to attend to the individual needs of the disadvantaged adult, who is beseiged with educational, psychological, social and economic problems. It is individual in approach, attempting to deal with those needs common to many, but affecting particular participants.

Two major limiting factors, from an operational standpoint, were evident. One of these has been allied to the lack of job openings in the area resulting from regional economic stagnation. The second limiting factor to a truly comprehensive system was the small size of the training complex and availability of staff to teach occupations. Nevertheless, the program does point the way to a complete program for a large, longer term agency.

The system has undergone a concurrent evaluation of the effort expended, of the performance and adequacy of the total system, and an attempt to identify important factors in the process of change. In fact, evaluation is going on at two levels. There is the descriptive, narrative, participant - observer approach to events as they transpire, and the statistical, controlled experiment approach to measuring results of activities. Both approaches have certain advantages and are fruitful in answering particular questions. We find that each enhances the value of the other.

The Program

The major components of the system consist of (1) variants of some standard manpower training programs, (2) innovative recruitment and assignment techniques, and (3) various placement methods.

These major program components are described dates and are presented graphically in Figure 1. Individuals are contacted through some form of active recruitment techniques and come to the NewStart offices for testing, assessment counselling and proper assignment in the program. Assignment may include anything from immediate job placement to participation in the full program in the sequence which seems to be best suited to the participant's needs. Placement is the ultimate goal for all entrants. Internal program variables are basic education upgrading (from illiteracy through grade 10), initial skills training (sub-professionals and entry trades), prevocational training, and combinations of these.

The participant may also receive assessment and assistance counselling, which help to determine his eligibility for training allowances, supportive services provided by the Corporation, and job development and placement activities in his behalf.

When he has entered the system, the industrial relations arm is alerted and begins a search for a proper eventual on-the-job training or final job placement slot for him. In many cases, employers have been invited to observe and interview prospective employees while they are still in training. The participant is hired by such an employer when all three parties, i.e., the trainee, the employer, and NewStart, agree that he is ready.

Figure 1 should be interpreted as indicating that some individuals may come into contact with every component, but that each individual will actually participate in only those components which he actually requires for eventual successful placement.

Cases and Summaries

Some brief case histories may help to illuminate the scope and the flexibility of the system. An assessment committee, composed of all operating specialists and utilizing information from several sources, determines the course any individual will take in his journey through the system.

Our first example was 25 years of age, had completed grade 8 in

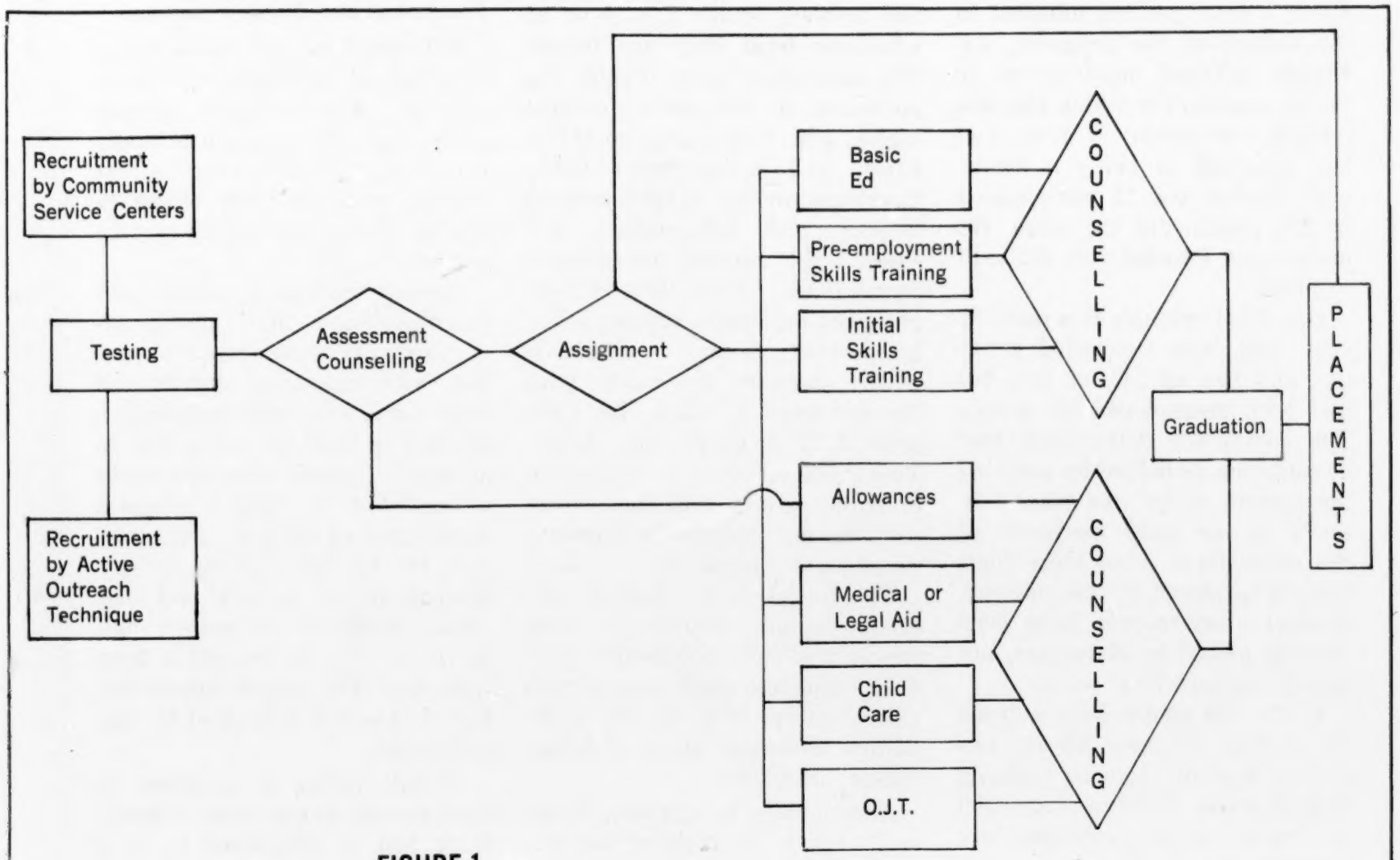

FIGURE 1

the regular school system, and had been unemployed one month when he entered the system. His last job was as a lumberman. He took basic education, pre-employment skills training, and automotive mechanics training. He received a training allowance, and considerable amounts of counselling. After ten months training, he advanced two grade levels, and 19 I.Q. points, from 59 to 78. He has been placed in a garage in a training situation, and will probably remain there after his O.J.T. period is over. Ten trainees have followed this sequence.

A second young man, aged 19 with only grade seven education went through almost the same course sequence, but for six months only. At entrance he was an unemployed fisherman's helper. He had an I.Q. of 88 which he raised to 104 by termination. He has now entered the Provincial Vocational Institute in the mechanics course which requires grade ten. He will probably complete the program through apprenticeship and enter the trade. Five individuals have gone on to further training from the program.

A girl, aged 20, followed a similar sequence, but spent much less time in basic education since she had grade ten upon entry. She took the health institutional attendants course. She made li-

4

mited grade level and I.Q. advancement, but this was expected due to a ceiling effect inherent in the nature of the program. Although offered employment in the occupation for which she was trained she turned it down and has returned to being a housewife. Ten of the 12 participants in this course did the same. We have found females very difficult to place.

Our final example is a man, 22 years old, who completed grade ten, and has an I.Q. of 114, but had been unemployed six weeks. The committee determined that he could not be helped by entering the system so he was placed directly as an auto mechanic at the entry level. Five individuals have been placed in this manner. Several other people have been directly placed by NewStart, but usually in part time work.

In all, 178 people have entered the system. Of these, 96 are employed, half of them in training related areas. Thirty-six are still on course and the remainder are unemployed.

Component Descriptions

Major components of the system are described below under four categories, based on the functions of a manpower development agency reported by Garth Mangum and Sard Levitan in "Design for a Federal Manpower Policy", Poverty and Human Resources Abstracts, Jan-Feb., 1967. These are (1) preparation for employment (2) placement and support services, (3) job creation and (4) research.

Preparation for Employment

The adult basic education component is designed to allow any recruit to enter at any level from illiteracy and proceed in it at his own pace to whatever level he may achieve up to grade 10. It must be borne in mind that they enter individually, and even though a program has been operating for several months some individuals start at point zero and some at grade 3 to 5 or at whatever level they are tested. The instructors have become experienced in the use of several media, and have access to tapes, films, and programmed texts. Curricula content is both general interest and informative, and specifically related to occupational fields. These commercially prepared materials, supplemented by teacher prepared materials which compare favorably with the commercial items, are compiled into a curriculum guide. This guide serves as an indication to both trainees and instructors what the next step in the learner's progression should be.

The initial skills training subsystem includes training in small engine and auto mechanics, welding, business and commercial skills, entry level health occupations and child care and homemaker assistants.

Additionally, this program provides entry to further occupational training through the Provincial Vocational Institute and through Holland College, the provincial College of Applied Arts and Technology.

NewStart had previously conducted courses in social development, quite similar in scope, content and methodology to the Saskatchewan Life Skills course, (though perhaps not as fully developed). For use in the manpower development system, however, this course was re-oriented and redesigned and became Pre-Employment Skills Training (PEST). It has become narrower in scope and uses a more highly structured format and methodology. Subject matter includes job search and interview techniques, actual city map reading and transportation system exercises in such Maritime centres as Halifax and St. John, industrial field visits, dress and behaviour requirements on a job, and a resource activities centre.

Placement and Support Services

Subsumed by this heading are included all activities related to making disadvantaged people aware that the program is really for them, and that every effort will be made on their behalf to insure their successful participation.

Recruitment is an active out reach measure. Mass media advertising, personal contact, contact with interested groups and other parties for referrals, and an immediate and open response to all letters, phone calls and walk-in applicants are used. Perhaps a homey way of indicating the attitude of the Recruitment Officer towards people is to reveal that when NewStart is phased out, he would like to become a beer salesman. The target population feel at ease and welcomed by this individual.

Initial testing is confined to determining grade level achievement and is considered to be a service designed to help establish that a candidate is qualified for entrance and to place him properly within the program. It should be emphasized that participants are originally selected at random from a pool of individuals

already identified as disadvantaged in terms of education or employment experience. It is felt that in terms of ultimate successful employment the cards are actually stacked against the Manpower Development System. Candidates are turned away only if they have above grade 10, if they already have a trade, or if there is no opening at time of application. Further testing takes place at certain pre-identified chronological and logical branch points to determine interests and aptitudes and to help measure progress in course. Naturally, also, these provide data for program evaluation.

Formal counselling has played a rather minor role in the project to date. There has been counselling activity, which took place in hallways and classrooms, over a cup of coffee and a cigarette, and sometimes in the counsellor's office. More recently a decision was made not to decrease this informal approach, but to add a formal element to it. This addition was made for two reasons. One is to insure that all participants receive some counselling while the other is to improve the quality of information coming out of the system, both for feedback and for ultimate evaluation purposes.

Traditionally, placement has been considered the final step in the training process or, all too frequently, one step removed from the training process and the control of the training institution. More recently, attempts have been made to encourage employers to promise employment to individuals while they are still in training. Only at the collegiate level does recruitment take place while the individual is still in training. While this is good for the employer, it appears likely to have a good effect on the employee, and especially upon those who hold a poorly identified employment goal.

NewStart therefore utilizes this approach to job placement. Employers are not only asked to promise jobs to graduates but are invited to interview them and to observe them in the training situation. Selectees are released to employment when he, NewStart and the employer all agree that he is ready.

When working with the disadvantaged, one point very quickly becomes quite clear. They require a complex of services to assist them with their multiple problems. Until an individual is contacted and counselled for some time, these are not likely to come to the surface, and even then are difficult to identify as definable problem areas which may be dealt with rationally. Nevertheless, concrete supportive services are provided, which include day care for children of participants and other needy families, legal and credit intervention where it is warranted, and medical aid. All participants receive as a minimum a full physical examination. In addition, the Corporation lends assistance in dealing with bureaucratic elements in welfare, training, housing, and health systems of the Provincial Government. Several cases have emphasized for us the point that equally as important as what happens within the training situation are the events which impinge upon the individual in his family and community milieu.

Besides the Manpower Development System, Prince Edward Island NewStart has a Community Development project. This project includes an outreach counsellor who assists in family counselling and in liaison between needy persons and service agencies. Families of participants in the Manpower System can utilize this service. The interplay of these components between the two systems has already been noted. An attempt to portray this graphically is shown in the Venn Diagram (Figure 2).

The large circle on the left represents the Comprehensive Manpower Development System with its large number of components. The circle on the right shows the Community Development project with its three components. Research is the common element to both systems, and the lines through the titles of some other components indicate that these are the areas of overlap. For example, jobs may be created by the community action of one system or the Industrial Relations Officer of the other. Counselling of different types for an individual or family in need of it may be acquired through either system or both in cooperation.

Job Creation

Considered specifically in relation to the Comprehensive Manpower Development System, the primary function under this category is on-the-job training. The Industrial Relations Officer must be a top salesman handling a unique product, and must persuade employers to take a trainee in an area with a very high rate of labour redundancy. Working with this officer is a follow-up counsellor who assists him in locating jobs with training elements, and who supervises all NewStart referrals to these jobs. The major purpose of supervision is to protect the employee by insuring that training does take place but also to insure that the employer is satisfied with his share of the bargain. We have become convinced that one satisfied employer leads to other openings.

Research

Research and evaluation are the twin umbrellas of all NewStart activities and all personnel are engaged in it to some extent, if only through the provision of basic data. Research and evaluation in an action project such as this actually serve two functions. In the first place they pro-

6

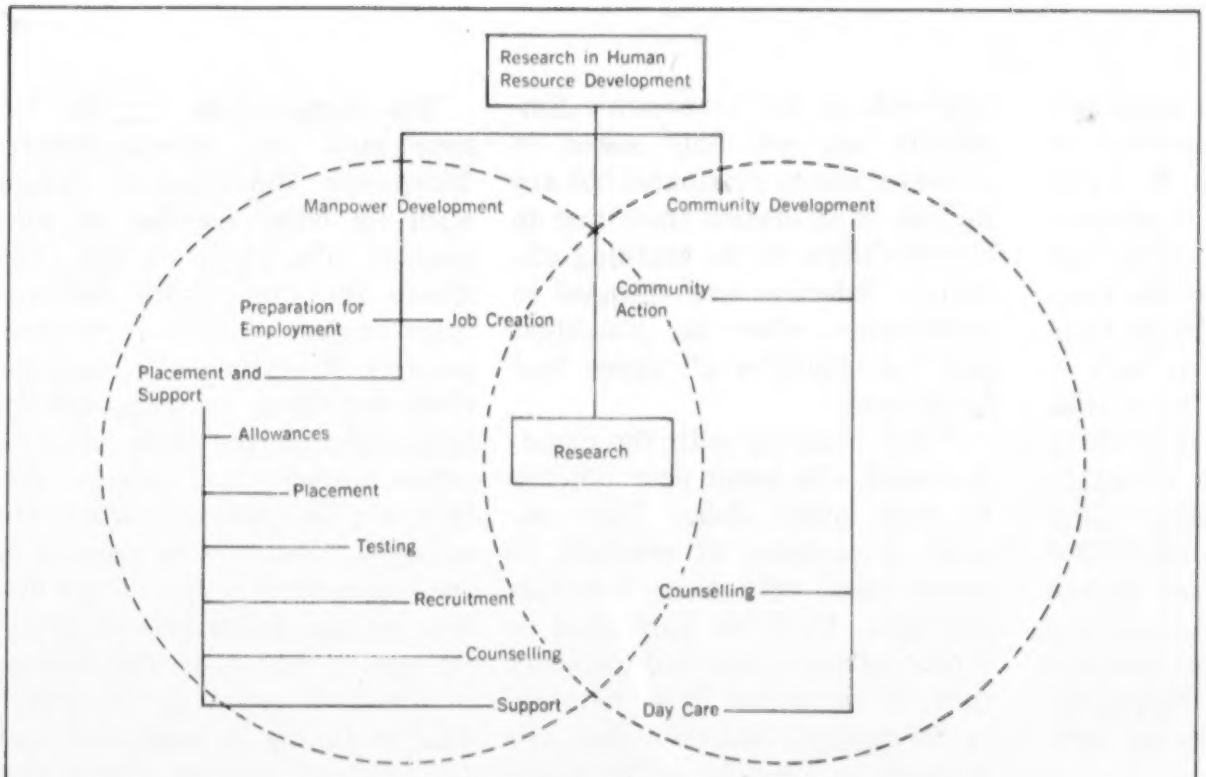

FIGURE 2. Venn diagram depicting interplay between manpower development and community development system

vide feedback for improvement of the system while it is still in progress and secondly, they provide indicators for proper planning of similar approaches or evidence that the concept should be scrapped.

A preliminary analysis of the Comprehensive Manpower Development System has been made using a stepwise multiple regression technique, in which a variable added at each step in the analysis is the one which contributes most to "goodness of fit" on the regression. That is, the variable added at each step in the computer program is the one which contributes most to achievement of the criterion; employment. The analysis was made after the system had run approximately six months and had seen over 80 persons enter and 59 persons graduated. Most of these were under 30, married, and unemployed. Almost half were males, they averaged one dependent, and very few had any other NewStart contact, such as using the Homemaker Service or entering their children in day care centres.

A series of 40 variables was considered in the analysis. These included demographic and labor market data, program characteristics, and attitude and achievement characteristics.

In attempting to determine what demographic, program and personality factors are associated with employment, only seven appeared as significant predictors. Of these, the variables which resulted in the greatest per unit increase in the criterion (employment) were:-

1. *Sex: male;*
2. *Marital status: single;*
3. *Previously employed;*
4. *Received job placement assistance through the New-Start Industrial Relations Office.*

When the question was limited to determine only what program factors are associated with employment, the matter of placement assistance leads the others by far. This led the analyst to conclude that any manpower development program must "obtain maximum benefits from restricted resources." In other words an active policy of placement is essential, regardless of the presence of such other inputs as basic education, occupational training and pre-employment skills training (PEST). The analyst found difficulty in placing any meaningful interpretation on the value of the latter component.

Lest the reader think that placement of itself is all that one must do to insure successful employment, it should be pointed out that only persons who have achieved a certain skill level in the occupational training areas receive placement assistance. Nevertheless, it is clear that training and counselling are not enough for successful employment. To complement the process, job placement must be integrated into the system. Further evidence for this contention is found in the disappointing increases in learning, indicating that successful employment cannot be attributed solely to increasing intellectual development.

It must also be borne in mind that this was a preliminary analysis, with a very small number of cases and utilizing a wide array of somewhat arbitrarily selected variables. The second and third analyses will see improvement in all of these limitations, as well as the system itself. ▲

ERIC Clearinghouse
AUG 2 0 1971
on Adult Education